WHY SAFEGUARDING SUNDAY?

Peter Wright, Head of Strategic Communications

Safeguarding Sunday began in 2018 with a small pilot project involving just a handful of churches. We wanted to see if giving space in a Sunday service to focus on safeguarding would help churches make their communities and places of worship safer. What we saw then, and what we continue to see now, with the thousands of churches that take part each year, is that it does. And the impact is greater than we could have imagined.

Safeguarding Sunday is now a national movement that invites churches across the UK to stand together and show that the safety and wellbeing of children, young people and adults is not an optional extra to faith, but central to our life and witness as followers of Christ. Each year, thousands of churches and Christian organisations of every tradition, denomination and size come together to take part.

As Christians, we believe each person is made in the image of God and therefore worthy of dignity, care and protection. Scripture calls us to speak up for those who are vulnerable and strive to create communities where people can belong without fear (Proverbs 31:8). Safeguarding Sunday offers churches a way to show that these are not just values to be talked about, but practices that shape how we live, worship and care for one another.

But when we reflect on some people's experience of church, it's clear we haven't always got things right. Our churches and Christian communities have not always been the safe places they should have been. The voices of victims, survivors and those with lived experience of abuse, from across the spectrum of Christian faith, challenge us to humility, repentance, and a renewed commitment to do better.

And that's what Safeguarding Sunday is all about. It's about your church, your congregation and your community. Supported by a national campaign, it provides an opportunity for you to talk openly about the safeguarding culture you are creating where you are, the practical steps you have in place, and the people you have who can be trusted if something isn't right.

As someone who regularly leads worship and preaches in my own church, I know that inviting a congregation to engage with something new like this isn't always easy. That's why we've created this guide, to help you begin those conversations. Being open about safeguarding isn't a sign you have a problem, quite the opposite. It's something to be clear and confident about, so that everyone who connects with your church knows they will be kept safe.

My prayer is that, as you consider getting your church involved, God would use this campaign to make his Church a safer place for everyone.